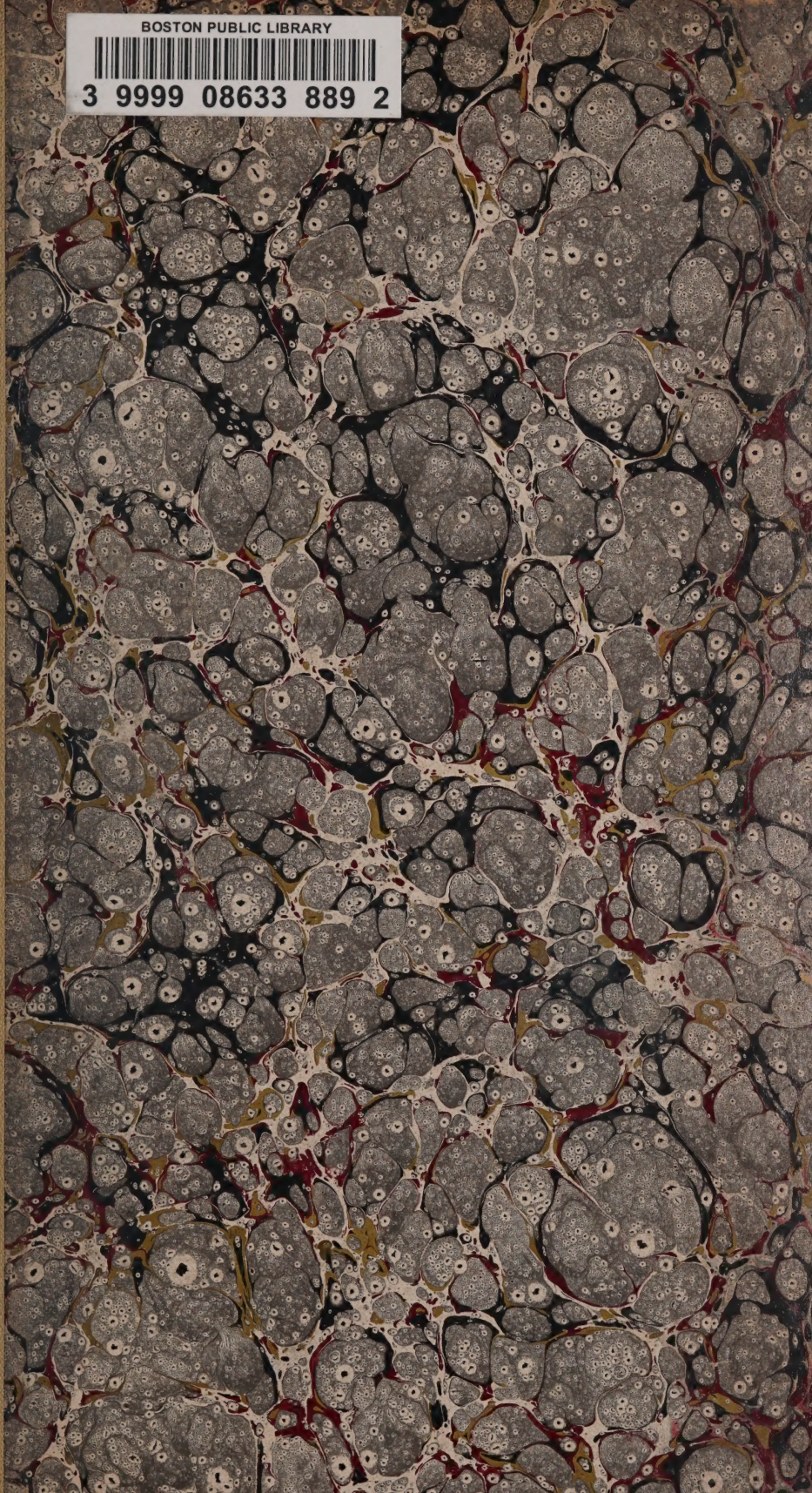


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AN IMPARTIAL

STATEMENT OF THE FACTS

IN THE CASE OF

7564.23

REV. GEORGE WITHERELL,

W
PASTOR OF THE BAPTIST CHURCH,

IN THE TOWN OF HARTFORD, WASHINGTON COUNTY,

NEW YORK,

IN RELATION TO THE OUTRAGE COMMITTED ON HIS FAMILY.

THE ATTEMPT TO IMPEACH HIS CHARACTER BY THE

PUBLICATION OF A FORGED AND FICTITIOUS

TRIAL—AND OF THE JUDICIAL EX-

AMINATIONS AFTERWARDS.

BOSTON :

PUBLISHED AT THE OFFICE OF THE BOSTON PRESS.

1831.

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From pp. v. 286

Edward Fassett

744 934
April 15, 1886

☞ The following pages will enable the Reader to understand the sufferings of the Rev. GEORGE WITHERELL, who was persecuted nearly unto death, for daring to break the bonds of masonry. The Contents of this Pamphlet are divided thus.—I. *An Account of the Outrage committed on Mrs. Witherell, on the night of September 27, 1830.* II. *A Copy of the FORGED TRIAL.* III. *Its Exposure and Refutation.* Also, *A History of the Means made use of by a Masonic Court of Justice to destroy his Character and wound the Feelings of his Family.* But Elder Witherell has surmounted all this persecution, and is now a bright and shining light in the Church.

DOCUMENTS, &c.

From the "Champion," published at Union Village, Washington County, State of New York, Oct. 6, 1830.

DARING OUTRAGE.

We learn from Hartford, that on Monday, the 27th ult. the Rev. **GEORGE WITHERELL**, Pastor of the Baptist church in that town, having some business to transact with Mr. Samuel Haile, of the same town, left home for that purpose, in the afternoon, with the intention of returning to his family before bed time : but on account of the rain which commenced and continued till late in the evening, he was induced to tarry at Mr. Haile's all night. Mrs. Witherell, finding that her husband did not return, and judging that he was detained by the rain, and that he would probably stay from home all night, suggested to her son (a young man about 17) the propriety of his taking a bed in a room adjoining, or near to the one in which she slept. At the dead hour of the night, after they had been asleep, Mrs. Witherell and her son were awoken by the sound of footsteps in the kitchen, which at first they supposed were those of a husband and a father : but they soon found their mistake. Two ruffians immediately entered the room where Mrs. W. was in bed, one of whom exclaimed as he entered, "Now you d—d perjured rascal, we will inflict upon you the penalty of your violated obligations." [Elder W. is a seceding mason.] At this moment young Witherell sprang from his bed, and ran towards the scene, exclaiming in loud and quivering accents, "Father, have you got home?—father, are you there?" &c. One of the ruffians seized Mrs. W. by the throat and made a pass at her head with his fist, or with a weapon, which, however, barely grazed her head, and struck the head board with considerable force. It is presumed from what followed, that the cries of the young man induced them to examine to see whether their intended victim was at home, for one of them drew from his pocket, or from under his coat a *dark lantern*, which he opened, and examined the bed. Finding the object of search was absent, they immediately decamped. The light which shone from the lantern, enabled young Witherell to discern that one of them had a large butcher's knife in his hand—that one of them was a large man, dressed in grey clothes—that they were both without hats, having black silk handkerchiefs on their heads (as he judged from their appearance,) which came down over, and veiled their faces. An alarm was immediately sounded, and some of the neighbours came in ; but as yet we have not heard that any discoveries have been made of the villains. We are apprised that a legal investigation is shortly to take place, till which time we forbear to comment.

PUBLIC MEETING.

At a public meeting of the citizens of Hartford, N. Y. and its vicinity, to investigate the outrage on the family of Rev. George Witherell, the following affidavits, procured by a committee chosen at a former meeting, were read.

AFFIDAVITS.

State of New York, Washington County, ss.

I, Lucinda Witherell, of the town of Hartford, in said County, being of lawful age, do depose and say, that on Monday night, the 27th of September, 1830, my husband, George Witherell, who is now, and for a length of time past has been, Pastor of the Baptist Church in Hartford, was from home, and was, as I was informed afterwards, at Mr. Haile's, detained in consequence of the rain, and did not return that night : that about 11 or 12 o'clock at night, as near as I could judge, I was awakened by the noise or stepping of some person or persons in the room adjoining my bed room. From the stepping I thought there were two. I then supposed it to be Elder Witherell, and thought some one had returned with him ; and supposed if they wanted supper they would speak. I was not uneasy at all. Soon I heard them open a chamber door ; this did not alarm me, as I supposed it to be Elder Witherell still. From the chamber door they went to the parlor door, which was open. Cannot say whether they entered the parlor or not. My bed room door was open, but the room was dark, and I did not then discover that they had any light. From the parlor door they came to my bed room door. I still thought it to be my husband, and was not frightened until, of a sudden, one of them, in the bed room door, exclaimed, "*you damned perjured scoundrel !*" and said something about "obligation," which my fear and alarm prevented my hearing, or recollecting distinctly. At this instant I drew the pillow over my face, and in a moment he tore the pillow off, or partly off from my face, seized me by the throat with one hand, and at the same time struck a blow, in which his hand just hit the top of my head, the weight of the blow hitting the head board. In another moment, he put his hand to the top of my head as if feeling for my comb. The other one then, standing near the bed side, presented a light ; I thought it to be a dark lantern ; held it up ; the light shone upon the bed ; he had in his hand a cane, or knife, or dirk, I cannot tell which. At this moment, my son, sleeping in the next room, spoke loud, and said repeatedly, "Father, have you come ? On discovering by the light, as I supposed, that Mr. Witherell was not in the bed, they immediately left the room, and went directly out of the nearest door, which was the back door of the house. They had no hats upon their heads. Their faces were covered with something dark ; thought it was a black silk handkerchief. The voice was to me a strange voice. The man who had the lantern was a large man, rather fleshy or portly in his appearance. The other I could not describe, such was my agitation. After they left the house, I heard a wagon immediately drive off to the south, quite fast. Mr. Smith and some of the neighbours were soon alarmed, but I have not been able to learn who these men were. The reason why I did not speak, was in consequence of my afright, and further say not.

LUCINDA WITHERELL.

Subscribed and sworn to, before me, this 4th day of October, 1830.

A. T. BUSH, *Justice of the Peace.*

State of New York, Washington County, ss.

I, George R. Witherell, of Hartford, in said county, of lawful age, do depose and say, that on Monday night, the 27th of September, 1830, be-

tween 11 and 12 o'clock, I was awaked from a noise ; heard some person or persons stepping in the adjoining room. I heard them go to the chamber door, from that they came to the parlor door in which I slept ; (I then thought it was my father, who was absent that night from home,) from that to the bed room door where my mother slept. I did not then see as they had any light. At the bed room door or in the bed room, I could not tell which of them exclaimed, " You damned perjured scoundrel, you shall now suffer the penalties of your obligations !" I had then got up and come to the parlor door, and I discovered one had a light. I could not see into my mother's bed room from where I stood. I spoke and said, " Father have you got home ?"—Nothing was said by them. I repeated my inquiry, " Father have you got home ?" when they immediately came out of the bed room door, and went out the kitchen door, which is the back door of the house. One of them, as I thought, had a large knife in his hand : looked like a butcher's knife ; I am confident from its appearance it was an edged tool of some kind. They both had something black tied or drawn over their faces : did not and could not see either of their faces. One was rather a thick set fleshy man ; the other was rather tall and slim. After they were gone, I went to Mr. Smiths and alarmed him, and he and I went to Mr. Loomis' and waked him up. Soon after they went out I heard a wagon drive off, as I supposed, to the south quite rapidly. I did not know or recognize the voice of the man who spoke. I did not know either of the persons. The one who spoke spoke in rather a coarse voice. When out after some of the neighbors that night, and while all was still, I heard a whistling from some person unknown at a short distance. When standing in the parlor door, I could see them distinctly as they came out of the bed room. When I spoke, neither of them spoke, or said any thing except the acclamation aforesaid. I further depose and say, that the reason of my believing one of them had a knife, or some steel instrument, was, that I saw it glitter by the light shining upon it. I further state that I have been opposed to doing any thing to promote party excitement, and for a time have been opposed to having my name appear in the paper, and nothing else than a sense of duty, and a desire to satisfy inquiry, and, if possible, throw some light on this mysterious affair, has prompted me to make this affidavit.

GEORGE R. WITHERELL.

Subscribed and sworn before me, this 4th October, 1830.

AMOS T. BUSH, *Justice of the Peace.*

State of New York, Washington County, ss.

I, Stephen Smith, of Hartford, of lawful age, do depose and say, that on Monday night, September 27th, 1830, about 12 o'clock, I was waked up by George R. Witherell, who related to me substantially the facts as set forth in his affidavit, upon which I waked up Mr. Hubbard, and went up to Elder Witherell's, where Mrs. Witherell was much affrighted, and told me the facts set forth in her affidavit. Before Mr. Hubbard came, and before any other person but myself came, I discovered muddy tracks on the floor, from the kitchen door to the parlor door, thence to other doors. It had rained that night. I went out to the road, saw fresh men's tracks, saw fresh wagon tracks. A short time before George came after me, I heard a wagon or carriage pass to the south, I thought quite rapidly. I afterwards went and got Mr. Loomis and some others to go up to Elder Witherell's, after which I returned home. Before I started to go to Elder

Witherell's, Mrs. Chase, who lives in the same house with me, told me she heard a whistling from some person unknown, apparently in the field near by.

his
STEPHEN X SMITH.
mark.

Subscribed and sworn this 4th October, 1830, before me.

AMOS T. BUSH, *Justice of the Peace.*

State of New York, Washington County, ss.

I, Nancy Chase, of Hartford, of lawful age, do depose and say, that on Monday night, Sept. 27th, 1830, about 12 o'clock at night, I was waked up by some noise, and soon after I heard a distinct whistling from some unknown person, apparently farther than the road, which would be in the field east, or south east from Elder Witherell's house, could not tell exactly where. I spoke of it then to Mr. Smith. When I first heard this whistling, I supposed it was day, but soon found out it was about 12 o'clock.

NANCY CHASE.

Subscribed and sworn, this 4th October, 1830, before me.

AMOS T. BUSH, *Justice of the Peace.*

The following Preamble and Resolutions were unanimously adopted and ordered to be published.

Whereas a meeting of the citizens of Hartford and its vicinity, has been convoked, to take into consideration the late mysterious and apparent attempt upon the liberty and life of the Rev. George Witherell, of Hartford, who has recently separated himself from the Masonic Institution, therefore, in pursuance of the object contemplated,

Resolved, As the sense of this meeting, that the fears and suspicions of the community are justly alarmed and excited on account of the recent intended violation of the rights of a fellow citizen.

Resolved, That from the unhallowed precedent set us, in the forcible seizure, and secret abduction and murder of William Morgan, a seceder from the masonic institution, from the evasion, the contempt and ridicule with which that murder was treated by the great mass of the fraternity, from the withholding of their co-operation in bringing the offenders to justice, and from the repeated commissions of perjury, in our Courts of Justice, to screen the guilty; from the direful threats previously heaped upon the head of Morgan, and from the subsequent exhibitions of malice towards those who have conscientiously dissolved their allegiance to the institution, we have strong forebodings, that the cup of masonic vengeance is not yet full, that her murderous votaries are yet thirsting for blood, unsatisfied.

Resolved, That in the present case, from the fact of Mr. Witherell's being a seceding Knight Templar, from the heavy denunciations heaped upon him, from the dark malignity manifested towards him, from the late numerous extra meetings of the Lodge in this neighbourhood, from the secret and untimely caucussing of the masons in this vicinity, from their indifference in ferretting out the plot, from their immediate attempt to fasten this outrage upon his friends to screen themselves, from the contempt and ridicule with which the intended outrage is at once treated by them; we have too much reason to consider the case parallel to the outrage of 1826, and that it has its origin in masonic vengeance.

Resolved, That this is only another natural and legitimate result of masonic oaths and dogmas, and that the infatuated instruments of a sinking cause, are, in this attempt, but acting up to the letter and spirit of that principle, which prompts them to take vengeance upon, and "bring to the most condign punishment," the betrayers of the once secret but now naked institution of Freemasonry.

Resolved, That, as citizens, we reprobate this unhallowed attempt, of apparently inflicting the penalties of masonic oaths, upon a fellow citizen, and we will use our earnest endeavors, "by the blessing of God, to bring the perpetrators to condign punishment."

Resolved, That seceding masons, so far from being objects of vengeance and malice, are justly entitled to our warmest confidence and gratitude; and we unhesitatingly pledge ourselves to stand by, protect and defend them from the assaults of a blood stained institution; the malignant efforts of the Brotherhood to the contrary notwithstanding.

[About one week after the publication of the above Affidavits, the following account of a *fictitious* Trial, attested by the FORGED name of a Justice of the Peace, was circulated by Handbill and Newspapers in the Western part of New York. This Forgery was immediately copied into all the principal Boston Newspapers and from thence into all the Country papers in New England.]

LOOK AT THIS!

State of New York, Washington County, ss.

The People } I, the undersigned, one of the Justices of the Peace
vs } in and for the County aforesaid, do certify that a com-
David Brown. } plaint was preferred before me against the above named
defendant on oath, for an assault and battery on Lucinda Witherell, of the town of Hartford in the County aforesaid, the wife of George Witherell, on the twenty-seventh day of September, one thousand eight hundred and thirty, in the night time. I further certify that process was by me issued, and the defendant arrested and brought before me for examination on the complaint. I further certify that the following witnesses were sworn.

Here follows the testimony of Mrs. Witherell and her son, which is substantially the same as contained in their affidavits, as published in the Advocate and other antimasonic papers. Then follows the direct examination of ELDER WITHERELL, by the counsel for the People, which is not material—we therefore omit it.

I further certify that the complainant's counsel here rested, and that the counsel for the defendant here commenced the cross-examination of the last witness, ELDER *George Witherell*.

Question. Where had you been on the day of the 27th of September, 1830?

Answer. Witness had been to the office of John Crary.

Q. What was your business at Crary's office during the day of the 27th?

Witness here appealed to the court—the court decided he must answer.

Ans. Witness had been there to see about the ELECTION.

Q. Was there any conversation held there about your renouncing masonry?

Ans. Witness and Mr. Crary had some conversation upon that subject.

Q. Was there any thing said about an expected attempt by the masons upon your life?

Witness again appealed to the court—the court decided that he must answer.

Ans. Witness said there were some fears apprehended.

Q. Did it rain?

Ans. It rained.

Q. What time did it stop raining that night?

Ans. Witness said it stopt raining about 8 o'clock in the evening.

Q. What time in the evening did you go to bed?

Witness again appealed to the court—decided that he must answer.

Ans. Witness said about 1 o'clock.

Q. Did Mr. Hale go to bed before you?

Ans. He went to bed about the same time.

Q. Did Mr. Hale remain at home all the evening?

Ans. He did not, he left home about 11 o'clock.

Q. How and in what manner did Mr. Hale leave home?

Ans. Witness said he left home in a wagon.

Q. How long was Mr. Hale absent?

Ans. Witness said about two hours.

Q. How far is Mr. Hale's house from your own?

Ans. Witness said about four miles.

Q. Did you know before Mr. Hale left home where he was going?

The witness appealed to the court who decided he must answer.

Ans. Witness said that he did.

Q. Was Mr. Hale's leaving home and going to the place where he did go, *a matter of arrangement between yourself and him?*

The witness appealed to the court—the court decided that he must answer.

The witness said he could not answer without **CRIMINATING HIMSELF.**

The court then informed him that he need not answer the question.

Q. Did Mr. Hale tell you after his return that night where he had been, and if so, where did he tell you he had been?

Ans. Witness said he did, *and that he had been to his house.*

Q. Did any person accompany Mr. Hale when he left home that night?

Ans. There was.

Q. How many persons accompanied Hale.

Ans. Witness said *one.*

Q. Did that one person *leave the house of Hale in his company?*

Ans. Witness said that he did.

Q. What was the name of the person that so accompanied him?

Witness appealed to the court—the court decided that he must answer.

Witness said that he could not answer without **CRIMINATING HIMSELF.**

The court said he need not answer.

Q. Was there *any other person* at Hale's house on the night of the 27th Sept. but yourself and Hale?

Ans. Witness said, *not to his knowledge.*

Q. Did you see Hale take *a large knife with him* when he left home?

Ans. Witness said *he saw Hale take a butcher knife."*

Q. Did Hale take *a dark lantern* with him?

Ans. Witness *says he did.*

Q. Is Hale an antimason?

Ans. Witness *says he is.*

Q. *Did Hale and witness go to witness' house on the night of the 27th day of Sept. 1830, as described in the testimony of Lucinda Witherell and George R. Witherell?*

Ans. *Witness could not answer without* **CRIMINATING HIMSELF.**

I hereby certify that the defendant was discharged from the complaint, there being no testimony against him. I further certify that I am the person before whom the affidavits of Lucinda Witherell, George R. Witherell, Stephen Smith and Nancy Chase, were taken on the 14th inst.

A. T. BUSH,

October 23, 1830.

Justice of the Peace.

[Washington County is in the East of New York, bordering on Vermont. This forgery first made its appearance in the extreme *west* of that State. As soon as it appeared there, the following certificate was published in the *Lyons Countryman*, Wayne County.]

The gentlemen, whose names are signed to the following communication, are among the most respectable freeholders, and worthy citizens, of this county. We ask, for their address, a candid perusal; and for those who have, without proof or reason, so foully impeached Elder Witherell's character, a full forgiveness, upon condition, that they abandon a cause, which requires such base means to support it.—*Countryman*.

TO THE PUBLIC.

The undersigned, inhabitants of the town of Williamson, members of the Baptist church, and former neighbors of the Rev. George Witherell, of Hartford, N. Y. Washington County, have seen with great regret a publication, headed *Wayne Sentinel Extra*, of October 16th, impeaching the character of the Rev. George Witherell, and accusing him of assuming the ruffians garb, and feigning an attempted assassination of himself, for the purpose of imputing it to others. To us, who have witnessed his uniform meekness, benevolence and rectitude, and that purity of example, which emphatically impressed upon our minds that christian precept of doing unto others as ye would they should do unto you, this unwarrantable attempt to injure his character and usefulness, and through him, the church, of which we are members, can be looked upon, in no other light, than an attack upon ourselves, and emanating from that society, which binds its members to traduce the character, derange the business, and oppose the interests, of every seceding member. Yes, fellow citizens, we cannot resist the conviction, that the same spirit, which aimed the knife at the heart of our neighbor and Pastor, now assails his reputation. And we feel it our duty, both as men and christians, to step forward, in defence of his character.

NATHAN L. AUSTIN,

PASQUA AUSTIN,

PASQUA AUSTIN, Jr.

Williamson, October 27, 1830.

AMOS PICKETT.

THOMAS CONGDON,

of Marion.

[By the following Documents it will amply appear, that this pretended trial of Mr. DAVID BROWN, was a pure FALSEHOOD, made out of the whole cloth, to destroy the character of the Rev. George Witherell, by describing him as confessing himself guilty before a Magistrate. The forgers made their falsehood assume the form of a Judicial Examination, the more effectually to impose on the public. To what acts of depravity will not masonry descend to be revenged on Seceders ?]

SANDY-HILL, NOV. 13, 1830.

Dear Sir—I received the enclosed handbill, while at Albany last week. It seems to have been extensively circulated at the West, and to have produced much excitement, and perhaps influence on the election. I immediately transmitted it to Mr. Bush before whom the examination purports to have been taken, with a request that he would certify the truth in relation to it, and permit us to publish it. By last night's mail, he re-enclosed me the handbill and the annexed certificate, with plenary power to publish it.

I know Mr. Bush. He lives in Fort Ann, about ten miles North of me, and is a worthy mason and respectable magistrate. I am acquainted with his hand writing, and know the signature to be genuine. I enclose you the whole for publication.

Your humble servant,

HENRY C. MARTINDALE.

Mr. Martindale is a member of Congress, and a gentleman of strict integrity. He enclosed to Mr. Bush, the handbill containing the pretended examination of Witherell, taken before Mr. Bush himself.—*Prov. Journal.*

State of New York, Washington Co. Town of Fort Ann.

I, Amos T. Bush, a Justice of the Peace in said county of Washington, do hereby certify that the *publication* hereunto annexed, purporting to be a certificate from me, detailing the examination of Elder George Witherell on the trial of a certain Mr. David Brown, is a most wanton piece of *forgery*; and that the unwarrantable use made of my name, in signing and attaching it to said publication, was without my knowledge or consent. I further certify that no such complaint or examination, or court was ever instituted or talked of being instituted before me against David Brown or any other man. All I have ever had to do in the matter, was simply to administer the oath to the persons subscribing the affidavits; and at that time, I was but just able to leave my bed. I further certify that I have never heard of any suspicion against David Brown, and as far as my knowledge extends, Elder Witherell has uniformly and peremptorily, both when under oath and otherwise, denied all knowledge of a participation in that outrage. I have never heard of his saying or testifying to any such thing, as being concerned in the affair. And as an act of justice to Elder Witherell, a much injured man, I do hereby publicly request all editors, who have given circulation to that spurious publication, to publish this certificate, and consider me as disclaiming all connexion with it, and to understand me distinctly in pronouncing it a base forgery, and a most profligate fabrication, without the shadow of truth.

AMOS T. BUSH.

Fort Ann, Nov. 12, 1830.

[It will be noticed on reference to the forged Trial, that Elder WITHERELL is made to state on the stand, that he went to the office of John Crary on the 27th of September, "to see about the ELECTION." This charge of being engaged in political *electioneering* was intended to injure him as a Minister of the Gospel. It *insinuates* that Hon. John Crary and Elder Witherell hatched up the "*Outrage*" as a political stratagem, whereas those individuals were as strangers to each other.]

Batavia, November 4, 1830.

JOHN CRARY, Esq.

Dear Sir—The Masons are circulating a handbill like the enclosed.—Will you have the goodness to inform me on the receipt of this, whether it is true or false—and what are the facts in relation to it, and oblige your friend, and obedient servant,

TRUMBULL CARY.

Salem, 6th November, 1830.

DEAR SIR :

Yours of the first instant is received this morning, enclosing a handbill, purporting to be signed by A. T. Bush, Justice of the Peace, on the 23d day of October last: certifying the examination of Elder Witherell in the cause of *The People vs. David Brown*.

Elder Witherell was not at my office on the 27th of September last, or at any other time to my knowledge. I was made acquainted with him, for the first time, on the 5th day of July last, at Granville, and have not seen him since, nor have I at any time had any correspondence or interview with him, either directly or indirectly.

The handbill must be a forgery. I shall however, endeavor to obtain further information on the subject, and if I do, it will be published with your letter and the handbill, unless you otherwise advise me.

With respect to the intended assassination of Elder Witherell, I know nothing more than has appeared in the newspapers. The supposed assassins are yet undiscovered.

I am truly yours,

JOHN CRARY.

HON. TRUMBULL CARY.

To the Baptist Church of Christ in Hartford :

DEAR BRETHREN—We, your Committee appointed to examine and draft resolutions respecting the family of Elder George Witherell, submit for your consideration and adoption :—

Whereas an unparalleled effort seems to be making by the masonic fraternity, to destroy both the reputation of our beloved Pastor and his family, by fabricating and circulating through a *prostituted Press*, and otherwise, false and scandalous reports, among which we notice, the wife of our Pastor, is held up to the public as a common prostitute, drunkard, &c.:—

Resolved, That as a Church, that, while we seriously deprecate so wanton, cruel, and uncalled for attack, we feel ourselves called upon, in truth, to rebut these reports, as being malicious, false, and entirely without foundation.

Resolved, That we view the multifarious, disingenuous, and barbarous attempts, to destroy the reputation of our worthy Pastor, Elder George Witherell, and his family, as legitimately growing out of the corrupt and sinking institution of freemasonry, which can only be sustained by the destruction of the innocent and upright, in which "*He that departeth from evil maketh himself a prey.*"*

HENRY MATTISON,

TIMOTHY ATWOOD,

CALEB BRAYTON.

} Committee.

Resolved, That the above be signed by the Moderator and Clerk of the Church, and submitted for publication.

CALEB BRAYTON, *Moderator*.

JOSEPH ATWOOD, *Church Clerk*.

Hartford, Washington Co. N. Y, November 19, 1830.

*Every reader of the above Resolutions, will please to read the 59th chapter of Isaiah.

COUNTY MEETING.

[At a public meeting of the citizens of Washington County, the Committee appointed to investigate the Witherell outrage made a report which was unanimously accepted.]

REPORT.

The Committee appointed at a previous Convention, to prepare and submit a full and detailed report of the outrage alleged to have been committed at the house of the Rev. GEORGE WITHERELL, in Hartford, on the night of the 27th September, 1830, and of the subsequent transactions originating from, and connected with the same, respectfully present to this convention, and with their approbation, to the public at large, the following

STATEMENT OF FACTS.

Since the publication of the affidavits, and the proceedings of the meetings held on the subject, we have maintained a determined silence on it, patiently awaiting the developements of this mysterious event. We have carefully watched every feature of the transaction, and every movement of friend and enemy. Longer silence and delay, would cease to be a virtue. We therefore call the attention of an enlightened, but highly insulted community, to a candid review of this matter, while we probe this core of corruption to the very centre, and expose another of the parturient throes of a *dying institution*. That sinister motives, and political designs, should not be imputed to us, we have chosen to wait till the ardor of the recent political struggle is past, and the fervor a little subsided, before we should broach the subject again. We are now dealing in facts, and defy contradiction. No falsehood too glaring, no calumny too malicious, no slander has been too vile to be put in circulation, to stifle inquiry, to misguide public opinion, to vilify the cause of anti-masonry, and what is still worse, to blast forever the standing and character of an innocent man, and sink his family into disgrace. 'Tis now time community should look at this transaction in its proper light. The time, the manner, and the circumstances of the commission of this outrage, the public have already been made acquainted with, by the affidavits some time since published. Suffice it to say in relation to those affidavits, they stand hitherto uncontradicted in any material point, by any testimony whatever. In them the facts are correctly set forth; and we repeat, that notwithstanding the five day's of *pretendedly* legal investigation of this matter for the purpose of killing those affidavits, they stand unrefuted and uncontradicted. Of that Court of examination, and motive in view, and the manner it was got up, we have something to say.

When those affidavits were taken, it was at a public meeting.—Every one who was disposed attended. Many masons were present, and asked any questions they pleased. The affidavits were subscribed in Fort Ann, before A. T. Bush, on the ground that Slade D. Brown and S. S. Cowan, Esqrs. before whom afterwards a pretend-

ed investigation was had, utterly refused to take and subscribe them. The meeting at Hartford voted to publish their proceedings, and the affidavits when subscribed, and gave directions to their secretary to that effect. The Fort Ann meeting also voted that the affidavits should be published, together with the offer of a reward, of whatever should be subscribed. The affidavits were accordingly forwarded for publication, and the Secretary of the meeting called on Wm. A. Moore, of Fort Ann, for the subscription paper containing the reward; but he refused to give it up, altho' the meeting had expressly voted its publication. That reward has never yet been published. When it was found that these affidavits would be made public, an effort was forthwith made to crush their influence. A proposition was made for a pretended legal investigation of the matter. A committee of five conferred together, to advise means to get up a court of examination. But a difficulty at once presented itself: Because to institute a court of examination, a complaint verified by oath, against some person suspected, must be entered before a Justice. And the question was asked by the committee, can any of us enter a complaint under oath against a man, when there is no person under heaven whom we suspect in the least? They all answered in the negative. What next then? In this dilemma they consulted Mr. Brown, the Justice. He told them, that if one man could swear he believed an outrage had been committed, that then *some other* person could swear that *some other* person had suspicion of *some other* person being guilty of the outrage; and thus that *third other* person be arrested. Another query was here raised, to know who would consent to be the person suspected and arrested? S. S. Cowan, who was afterwards one of the Court of Examination, went and consulted Benjamin Hyde, a royal arch mason, to know if he would consent to be the criminal in the case. Hyde consented. A difficulty then arose with the committee as to the employment of counsel. The prisoner, they said, would have a right to counsel of course: some of the committee therefore proposed that there should be counsel employed in behalf of the People. But Slade D. Brown, the Justice, objected to this, on the ground that the People might employ counsel, who would quash the complaint and withdraw the prosecution, and thus defeat the whole design. The Justice and some of the committee could not therefore agree in relation to the employment of counsel, and the committee dissolved. In some of the consultations above alluded to, it was directly stated, that the object of the wished-for investigation, was to break down the witnesses, and kill the influence of those affidavits. Either from the belief, that should Benjamin Hyde be complained of, the complaint might prove too well founded, or that freemasonry might some way be implicated, the plot of complaining of, and arresting Hyde, was abandoned. But the design was not thus to be defeated. Another plan was adopted, "which none but craftsmen" must be let into. John Hillebert, of Fort Ann, a master mason, went before Slade D. Brown and made oath, that he believed an outrage had been committed at Elder Witherell's house. This was one part of the complaint, but not

enough to issue a warrant against any particular person upon.—To make out the rest, Alanson Allen, a royal arch mason of Hartford, swore that “he was informed that it was rumored, or suspected, or reported,” that Alonzo Hyde (a son of Benjamin Hyde) was one of the persons implicated in the outrage. Upon this most singular, spliced, and patched up complaint, Slade D. Brown issued a warrant against young Hyde for assault and battery, who had been previously consulted on the subject, and the poor *alleged* criminal was apprehended. This same Alanson Allen, the complainant, has said from first to last, to all far and near, that he did not believe any outrage had been committed, that it was all a hoax. Yet strange to tell, by a little help from John Hillebert, he swore to enough to apprehend an innocent man, on whom no suspicion rested. The Court was finally organized. The Justices were Slade D. Brown and S. S. Cowan, royal arch masons. The complainant, Allen, the constable, John Norton, and both of the counsel, were royal arch masons. One of the counsel was appointed on the prosecution, and the other for the prisoner, so that the staff should be completely in masonic hands. The next step taken was to secure the witnesses. Process was issued for them, and they were brought into Court. Strange as it may appear, and unprecedented as it is in the annals of jurisprudence, the prisoner remained in Court but a little time, before he was away about his business, was out of town, was also about weighing his hogs, and getting in his crops, paying little or no regard to the trial; while on the other hand, the witnesses were kept under the most rigid custody of the constable, in separate apartments, not permitted to speak to each other for a length of time.

Mrs. Witherell was first sworn. She went through with a plain, simple statement of facts, substantially as set forth in her affidavit. She had never before been in a court of justice. She underwent a most scrutinizing cross-examination, both from the Court and opposite counsel, for the space of some four or five hours; yet unfortunately for some of her examiners, not one solitary material point could be elicited to discredit her affidavit. She requested permission, after her long examination, to go home a few minutes, as no one was left with her small children during the day. This was inhumanely denied her. Her youngest child had come almost to the tavern where she was, crying in the street, and she persisted in going, and went out into the road. The Court ordered the constable to do his duty: he followed her, laid violent hands upon, and threatened to bind and carry her back. She finally consented to return to the Court for further examination; and all for what? Why, forsooth, to get *something* to invalidate her affidavit, and give the “prisoner” time to weigh his hogs. Her husband was not allowed to see her, or hear her testimony. During all her examination, not a question was asked about Alonzo Hyde, the prisoner: his name was not mentioned. All the effort seemed to be, to break down and destroy the witness’ testimony.

Elder Witherell next underwent a long and close examination. His testimony went far to corroborate that of his wife. He ac-

knowledge he appeared with reluctance before that Court, on the ground that he thought it illegal, and a mere farce, to destroy the reputation of himself and family, rather than to convict the prisoner.

Mr. Smith and Mrs. Chase were next sworn, and substantiated every fact set out in their affidavits.

Elder Witherell's son, who was arrested on the Sabbath at Fort Ann, and taken by two constables to Hartford, and kept in their custody, was next examined. This examination, the most minute, the most crossing, and rigid of all, lasted about seven hours; when lo, and behold! neither the threats, nor the frowns, the devices nor the ingenuity of masonic dignity and *affected* sagacity, could draw forth a single material contradiction from the boy. His testimony corroborated and strengthened Mrs. Witherell's in every important point.

Upwards of three days had now been consumed in this pretended legal investigation, and the great object aimed at, namely, the destroying of those witnesses and their affidavits, had not yet begun to be accomplished. So far from that, the commission of the outrage was established to the satisfaction of every candid spectator, and the first affidavits more than confirmed. What next to do, was matter of solicitude. To leave it where it then was, would be far worse than ever. The frowns of community would rest too heavily on that midnight transaction. As a last resort, therefore, they determined to ruin the character and impeach the testimony of Elder Witherell's family. And now we stop here for a moment, while we animadvert upon the conduct of some concerned in that pretended investigation with merited severity; they deserve the lash publicly inflicted upon them. They have outraged common decency. What! impeach the testimony and destroy the reputation of that family, and for what? Good heavens! for what? Was it because they feared the testimony would convict Alonzo Hyde of the offence? Surely not: for not one particle of the testimony had touched the case of Alonzo Hyde, or thrown one suspicion over him: and little did he care for the evidence or Court.—Where then the necessity of destroying that family! It was nothing else than an apprehension that community would believe the testimony of those witnesses, and fasten the odium of that transaction upon the truly guilty. Accordingly, masonic witnesses, not a few, were introduced to swear down the reputation of Mrs. Witherell and her son. Community was ransacked to obtain instruments to accomplish their design; and so nearly did they succeed, as almost to prove that Elder Witherell's wife was once bitten by a mad lamb, used to have the hysterics sometimes, and once burned up a batch of bread, and therefore was not to be believed under oath: and that some said the boy was not a boy of truth and veracity, and on these powerful rebutments, the Court very gravely summed up the case, and concluded that no outrage had been committed.

We stop here for a moment to comment. The fraternity have far and near endeavored to palm off this outrage upon the antima-

sons, yet in another moment, they deny the whole, and contend that no outrage has been committed. Hundreds of far-fetched, irrelevant questions were crowded upon the witnesses; a redoubled effort at every step to make them tell what every antimason had said, what they had heard men in Fort Ann, and Kingsbury, and Hartford, say. The Court said they must do so, "to throw light on the subject;" but the moment an inquiry about the expression of "executing the penalties of an obligation" was made, and masons called on to testify, that moment the gates were shut down and inquiry stopped. After a sufficient effort had been made to break down the witnesses, the cause finally closed, and Hyde again permitted to go about his work, from which, in five days, he had been detained two or three hours, a consultation was held to know what should be done with the proceedings. It was finally determined to fix them for the press, and forward them so late that the antimasons should not have an opportunity to rebut before election. And accordingly SLADE D. BROWN, the Justice, and supervisor of the town of Hartford, prepared an elaborate and mangled report of the trial, and it was published in the Sandy Hill Herald just on the eve of election. In that report, truth is outraged, and decency set at defiance. Misrepresentations the most glaring and falsehoods the most palpable, are set forth. Witnesses are there made to say directly the reverse of what they swore. Did time permit, we would analyze this report, but as it is, we leave it for the supervisor and the citizens of Hartford to settle at their next town meeting. They have shown their detestation of this farce, by the recent election.

This is but a mere outline of some of the doings relative to this affair. Elder Witherell swore on that trial directly that he had no knowledge of the persons concerned in that outrage. His wife and son swore to the same. And yet, let us look for one moment at the manner in which this injured man and his family, and this outrage have been treated by the masons. What! in the absence of the man, is his house to be entered, wife seized by the throat, the masked ruffians with the weapons of death by her bed side, threatening the execution of violated penalties, and simply because the man and his alarmed family make known the outrage in the neighborhood, and simply publish the facts, without charging it upon any man, or set of men, what is the result? Why, plunge a dagger at his reputation; swear down his family; put speed to every foul report; let the tongue of slander be unchained; proclaim it upon the house-top, that he has committed the outrage himself; that it is an electioneering device; a political hoax. This was the simultaneous expression of masonic vengeance; and messengers charged with the venom of slander, outstripped the wings of the wind, to make the first impression upon the public mind.—Ten miles in one direction, and a stout report would meet you, that "Elder Witherell was one of the ruffians, and had acknowledged it:" ten miles in another, and "Elder Colver and David Brayton had done it:" in another, "his (Witherell's) wife was drunk and had a fit:" in another, "his Boy is indicted for perjury,

and Elder Witherell and all his family have run away:" in another, "the wagon was tracked, to an anti-mason's house:" in another, "Mr. Hale was the man, who had the butcher-knife:" in another, "Elder Witherell dreamed that night at Mr. Hale's, that he was going to be murdered:" in another, "no outrage has been committed, and the boy has acknowledged he lied and swore false."—Ask some of these propagators of slander, "where did you get your news?" "I had it from a man right from Hartford, who was at the trial." Is it not enough to make decency blush and truth hide its face? Kill the man, destroy his family, because his life has been endangered, and he ventured to make it known. Ah, we see but too plainly the cause of all this abuse. Freemasonry, with her blood-thirsty oaths, has done this: and by the conduct of her votaries, she plead guilty to the charge. Antimasonry needs no such subterfuges; time will yet develope this dark transaction, the writhings of the Fraternity notwithstanding.—As if the character of Elder Witherell and family, were not yet sufficiently black, to cap the climax of abuse and deception, a most libellous, wanton and forged publication was sent out: the name of Amos T. Bush, Justice of the Peace, forged and signed to it, wherein he is made to certify that a trial had been had before him, against David Brown, and Elder Witherell is represented as swearing reluctantly, that he and Hale were the ruffians, who took the Butcher's knife, &c.!! This story was circulated in handbills, in all the western and middle counties, on the days of election, and probably lost Mr. Granger many votes. The western papers teemed with it, and antimasons knew not then how to rebut it. But it is now known that that base publication is traced back to this county, and had its first publication, near a neighboring Sand Bank.—Amos T. Bush has publicly exposed the forgery of that publication. Here then rests the Hartford Outrage. Not one particle of proof has been found to fix this upon an antimason or Elder Witherell. And while the fraternity have trumpeted this from town to town, and from bar-room to bar-room, to ruin the character of an injured man, and fix it upon antimasons, it will only re-act upon their own heads.

Published by order of the Convention.*

ERASTUS D. CULVER,
JOHN KING,
STEPHEN BRAYTON,
MASON MARTIN,
CALEB BRAYTON,

Hartford, June 7, 1831.

Committee.

* [The Committee in their Report state, that, "In the Antimasonic Champion of the 21st November, 1830, there appeared a communication, presenting a condensed view of that outrage, and of the self-styled "*Court of examination*," subsequently held to investigate it, by *Slade D. Brown*, LATE Supervisor of the town of Hartford, and *S. S. Cowan*, THEN a Justice of the peace. That communication contained a CORRECT HISTORY of the transaction; but nearly failed of all its effect and force, by not having been properly authenticated and vouched for by some responsible body or person." We have preferred this statement, as being the most brief.]

From the Washington, (N. Y.) Banner.

MR. LANSING—In perusing the Free Press, printed at Boston, No. 18, Vol. 1, new series, I noticed the doings of an Antimasonic Convention in Plymouth County, Mass., which is the county of my nativity ; and among the resolutions which they passed is the following :

“Resolved, That we consider the late Masonic outrage upon Elder Witherell, (well known in some parts of this district as an able, upright, and honest man,) together with the subsequent forgery, as meriting the deepest detestation of every lover of liberty and law.”

It is a matter of gratification to a man wading through deep waters of affliction, being calumniated, slandered, and abused, to know that he has friends who can feel and sympathize with him, and who will do their utmost to sustain him against the unmerciful course of his persecutors.—Accept, gentlemen, my grateful acknowledgments for your sympathy and kindness.

GEORGE WITHERELL.

Hartford, April, 1831.

[It may gratify the Reader to know the result of the Persecution of Elder Witherell. Suffice it to say, that at the next election, SLADE D. BROWN, S. S. COWAN, the Masonic Justices, and NORTON, the Constable were removed from office by the People (for in New York those offices are elective) and all concerned in these outrages were put down, so far as Public Opinion could reach them. The last we have heard of Elder Witherell is taken from a Religious paper in Vermont, of a recent date, by which it appears, that he has triumphed over his persecutors and slanderers, and is a bright and shining light in the Church.]

Extract of a Letter from ELDER WITHERELL to the Editor of the Vermont Telegraph, dated

Hartford, N. Y. August 9, 1831.

Last Sabbath was one of the most pleasant and interesting days of my whole life. It will never be forgotten by many on earth, and it will be called to recollection in eternity with gratitude and joy. I preached upon a part of the 11th verse of the 16th Psalm ; “In thy presence is fullness of joy ; at thy right hand there are pleasures forevermore.” I never preached with greater liberty and satisfaction to myself.—“At thy right hand there are pleasures forevermore.” Here I took my hearers and went up with them to take a view of the glories of Heaven, and of the pleasures which are at God’s right hand ; and oh what a visit many of us had ! After the exercises we repaired to the water, where I buried with Christ by baptism in the likeness of his death, ten joyful converts, in presence of a cloud of witnesses that thronged the banks of the stream. We then returned to the meeting house, where forty one came forward in the broad aisle, and received the right hand of fellowship. Forty of them had been baptized since our last communion ; twenty the third Sabbath of July ; ten the last, and ten the present Sabbath of August. We then came around the table of the Lord. The communion was full, and what added to the solemnity of the scene, and greatly increased the joy of older professors, and was an occasion of gratitude, there were fifty or sixty youth from 12 years old to 25, the greater part of whom had never celebrated the love of their dying Redeemer before. Oh,

“ ’Twas a young heaven on earthly ground,
And glory in the bud.”

I have now baptized 62 since the commencement of the revival. A number more are ready and will probably go forward next Sabbath. As ever, yours in the best of bonds.

GEORGE WITHERELL.

AUGUST, 16. Last Sabbath I baptized nine. There was one circumstance which rendered the scene peculiarly delightful ; six of the nine were husbands and wives—three younger men with their partners—making in the whole 71.

LETTER OF MR. SHEDD,

*A Masonic Witness in the Trial of Elisha Adams, one of the
Morgan Conspirators.*

I propose to state the evidence and circumstances which have convinced me that Morgan was put to death by Freemasons; and I am confident that those who have traced the progress of that conspiracy, so dark and fearful in its character, can no longer resist the conviction that it ended in the foulest and most deliberate murder.

The first reason which I shall offer and which naturally induces the belief that he was murdered is, that he had sworn in a lodge and chapter, that he would forfeit his life if he should ever reveal the secrets of Freemasonry or violate its masonic obligations.

As an Entered Apprentice, he has sworn if he ever revealed the secrets or violated the obligations of that degree, to have his throat cut from ear to ear; his tongue torn out by the roots, and his body buried in the rough sands of the sea, &c.

As a Fellow Craft, to have his left breast torn open, and his heart and vitals taken out. As a Master Mason, to have his body severed in two in the midst, his bowels burnt to ashes, and the ashes scattered to the four winds of heaven. As a most excellent Master, to have his breast torn open, his heart and vitals taken from thence, and exposed to rot on the dung hill. As a Royal Arch Mason, to have the top of his skull smote off, and his brains exposed to the scorching rays of a meridian sun. These were the penalties annexed to the wilful violation of the several obligations I have enumerated; and every Royal Arch Mason implicates and invokes upon himself those horrid penalties, on condition of his not keeping his masonic obligations inviolate. It will be borne in mind, that the revelations, Morgan was about to make, created great alarm among the fraternity. They foresaw that the ruin of the institution was inevitable, if he was suffered to proceed; and as the masons then universally believed these obligations religiously binding, reckless and enthusiastic men could be found, so attached to the institution, that they would not hesitate to execute the penalty of some one of these obligations upon Morgan, and satisfy their consciences with the reflection that they had done their duty. It was supposed by Col. King and other highly intelligent masons, that the Grand Lodge had a right to try and punish Morgan for Masonic treason, and much importance will be attached to this, when it is recalled to mind that masons universally have asserted that Morgan had forfeited his life, and if he was put to death, it was no more than he deserved.

If there is no meaning in the penalty, there is none in any part of the obligation, and if masons were not bound to execute the penalty upon Morgan, when according to the obligation he had forfeited his life by making a disclosure, then they are not bound by any part of the oath.

When Morgan was first brought to Fort Niagara, it was expected that the Canadian masons would assist in carrying him out of the country; but they refused, and he was incarcerated in the magazine, where he remained five days. It would seem that the masons of New York were thwarted in their original intentions, and as they dare not liberate him because so many respectable men were implicated in the guilt of his abduction, they held a consultation upon his disposal, and deliberately came to the conclusion, that he merited death for having violated his masonic obligations, and that they would assume the awful responsibility of becoming executioners.—At this consultation, it has since been proved in a court of justice, were seven masons, all of them intelligent, worthy and respectable citizens; one of them however recanted, burst into tears and said, 'Gentlemen, I am bound as a mason to go with you, but it is getting late, and I wish to be excused.' They then postponed this execution to some more convenient time, but went to the magazine, reproached Morgan with the awful guilt of violating his masonic obligations, told him he had not long to live, and asked him what death he preferred to die. Morgan replied, "I am a soldier, shoot me; but if you put me to death, you will do masonry a more serious injury than to suffer me to live." On the subsequent night a similar consultation was held at which four masons were present.

The conduct and declarations of Garside, a Canadian, and a Royal Arch Mason are worthy of notice: He was a man of savage and relentless disposition, which masonry, *all charitable and divine as it is*, could neither temper or soften. He stated in the Lodge in Canada, (where several masons met and consulted upon the propriety of aiding in the conspiracy, and upon the means of conveying Morgan out of the country) and in my presence on another occasion, that Morgan deserved to die for revealing the secrets of masonry; that he would rejoice to have an opportunity to put him to death, and if he was to be punished for the deed, he would willingly ascend the scaffold and glory to die a martyr in the cause of Freemasonry; for he considered its destruction as a great public calamity: On Saturday previous to the disappearance of Morgan, Garside came to me while I was in the Fort, and inquired if Morgan was still in the magazine. I replied that I believed he was, but had never seen him. He then repeated in substance what I had before heard him remark concerning Morgan; stated that he was willing to put him to death, and asked me if I would go and introduce him to Col. King, that he might obtain his consent and put him to death in the magazine. I refused to comply with his request. Col. King resided about one mile from the Fort, was two days previous installed High Priest of a benevolent Chapter at Lewiston, and was considered on account of his high masonic office, as well as his elevated and respectable rank as a citizen, as the most proper person to direct the movements in relation to Morgan. No measure of importance would have been taken without his consent or approbation.

I would here remark, that I then considered my masonic oaths morally obligatory, and that the abduction of Morgan by masons,

his confinement in the magazine, the plan of taking him to Quebec and from thence to England, were all secrets as strictly masonic in their nature as the obligation to keep the secrets of a brother, *murder and treason* not excepted, or to extricate a brother from difficulty whether *right or wrong*, or any other secret of masonry. The plan to seize and convey Morgan out of the country was deliberated upon, and matured in the silent and secret conclaves of the lodge rooms, and by committees chosen by the different Lodges and Chapters in the western part of the State, who met and arranged the plan of operations. The disposition made of Morgan was considered as strictly a masonic measure; for his seizure and the efforts to suppress the publication of his book, were made for the benefit of masonry, to save the institution from reproach and ruin; and every mason understood that he was compelled to keep what he knew of the transaction as a masonic secret, without an injunction to that effect. But I was enjoined, and I presume others were, to keep what was communicated to us as such; and even the oath of a master mason was sufficiently comprehensive in its terms to embrace every thing that was then entrusted to us. Although Col. Jewett, the superintendent of the Fort, and myself had determined to know as little about the transaction as possible, yet some things of consequence were communicated to me, and so long as I considered my masonic obligations binding, I was never at liberty to reveal this request of Garside, or any thing in relation to Morgan of which I had knowledge, to any except freemasons; and I am filled with sorrow and indignation when I remain a slave to those wicked and baneful oaths. The conduct and declaration of Garside I attributed to his excessive zeal and enthusiasm in the cause of freemasonry, and did not suppose it was the original design of masons to put Morgan to death. On the contrary, I was informed it was not their intention to do him the least harm; that their object was to convey him to England, on board a British vessel, if they could find one whose commander was a mason, to suppress the publication of his book, and it was stated that they would support his family in his absence. I was not then prepared to expect, what I believe soon after transpired, and when I was told that Morgan had been taken away, I supposed the Canadians had finally concluded to aid in the conspiracy, and had taken him to Quebec. It would have been difficult at the time to convince me that he had been murdered; for I had too high an estimation for the honor and benevolence of those men who took an active part in the transaction, to believe they would be guilty of such a crime. About six weeks after his disappearance, I heard Eli Bruce, then High Sheriff of Niagara county, in a conversation with Colonel Jewett, remark that if Morgan was put into the river, it was probable the fish had eaten him, or he was consumed in some other manner before that time, so that there was no danger of his ever being found. Jewett observed that Giddins walked the beach of the lake every morning, to see if any dead body had washed ashore the preceding night.—Giddins actually received such directions from Col. King, but never complied with them; Col. Jewett however supposed he did.

Some time during that autumn a dead body was discovered which had washed ashore a few miles from the Fort. Col. King, it is said was much agitated and alarmed, when that circumstance was communicated to him, and went immediately to Lewiston to avoid being on the jury of inquest; and he stated to Dr. Pope of that place, that he believed it was the body of Morgan and requested him to go and disinter it that night and make a skeleton of it.— When Giddins was on his return from York, U. C. where he was at the time Morgan was removed from the magazine, he inquired of the captain of the boat, a mason, what they had done with the prisoner; the captain replied, that he “guessed he was put where he would write no more books.”

After Giddins returned, it was stated to him that Morgan had been murdered, and Garside by innuendoes clearly indicated that such had been his fate and that he assisted at his murder.

Some time during the spring subsequent to the abduction of Morgan, the people of that vicinity were excited to a high degree, on account of his mysterious absence, and the taunts and reproaches of masons cast upon those who were endeavoring to investigate the affair, that a company was collected to rake Niagara river to discover if possible the body. Garside was exceedingly alarmed at this movement, and stated to Giddins his fears that the body would be found; for he said “when they rake in such a place, it makes my heart leap into my mouth, for there is where we put him, and by heaven they’ll find him.” He then proposed to go and fish for the body, and if they found it to take it far into the lake where it would be secure. The foregoing declarations of Garside have been proved in a court of justice. Soon after Morgan’s murder, Howard of Buffalo, whom the citizens of Batavia endeavored to arrest, for setting fire to Miller’s printing office, in order to destroy the secrets which Morgan had revealed, and which were then in that office for publication, fled to New York city, entered the Grand Lodge, and in the presence of the brethren, declared himself concerned in the murder of Morgan. Money was then given out of the funds of the Grand Lodge which had been amassed for *charitable* purposes! he fled to England where he has resided ever since. In extricating him from his *difficulties*, the brethren lived up to the letter and spirit of their obligations, and did no more than their duty as masons. Mr. Griffin, a lawyer of celebrity in Rochester, a freemason, who has been employed as counsel in all the Morgan trials, stated that it was communicated to him that three persons rowed Morgan into the river, threw him overboard and that they narrowly escaped falling in after him.

About six months after the disappearance of Morgan, a Knight Templar, a gentleman now a resident of Michigan, of high standing, of estimable and unimpeachable character, who had many opportunities of knowing what his fate was, communicated to me, as a *masonic secret*, that he had been murdered by freemasons. This occurred at Fredonia, N. Y. when on my way to Michigan, and was the first positive information I received of his fate, for the facts which I have stated above, and which did not transpire within my

own knowledge, had not then been communicated to me. This gentleman did not relate it to me as having occurred within his own knowledge, but as having been communicated to him as a secret by some of the brethren. He stated that eight masons held a consultation upon the disposal of Morgan, and agreed to draw lots to see on which three of them it should fall to execute him; and they put eight tickets into a hat, and on three of them were certain marks, and it was agreed that each one should draw, immediately separate, and not examine their tickets until they were far from each other; the five who drew blanks were to return home different ways, so that they might not know who drew the tickets with marks, and of course could not be witnesses against them. The three who drew those marks were to repair to the magazine, at a certain hour, and put him to death. This was to be done by attaching heavy weights to him, and throwing him into the river.—Weights have since been found in the river, while raking for his body. The similarity between this and the previous consultations that were held, as testified by Giddins in Court, seems to render this account very probable; for it was stated by him that one of the seven who were at the council held near the magazine, the evening after Morgan's arrival, proposed to draw lots to see which three of them should take his life; but another observed that *they would all go and do their duty.*

And here I cannot forbear to relate a conversation which took place between Gov. Clinton and Victory Birdseye, Esq. the Special Counsel appointed by the Government of New York, to conduct the Morgan trials. This conversation occurred some time during the spring subsequent to the abduction of Morgan, and was communicated to me by Mr. Birdseye last winter; and he remarked he supposed Clinton mistook him for a mason. I make this disclosure to show why this catastrophe has so long remained concealed in clouds and darkness, and that it is probable a gloomy mystery will hang around it forever. The Governor stated to Mr. Birdseye, that if Morgan was drowned in the river, none could ever be convicted of his murder; "for," said he, "as you lawyers know, in order to convict a person of murder, it is first necessary that a murder should be judicially proved; the mere absence of a man is not sufficient. A murder must be proved either by the discovery of the dead body, or by the confession of the murderers, or by the testimony of the witnesses who saw the murder committed. It is not probable that the body will ever be discovered, for if it was thrown into the river, weights were doubtless attached to it to keep it down; neither is it probable that the murderers will ever confess it, and if there were witnesses standing on the bank of the river they could not testify so as to convict them of murder; for Niagara river separates two distinct governments, and the dividing line passes through the middle of it. Now it would be impossible for witnesses, standing upon the bank in the night time, to tell whether Morgan was murdered on this or that side of the line; whether he was murdered in the United States or in Canada; and until that question was determined, they could not know what

court would have jurisdiction of the crime, whether a court of the United States or of Canada." It is now impossible to ascertain if the murderers of Morgan foresaw these consequences, but from what has already been stated, it is evident that they were men of good standing, shrewdness and intelligence, and not the rash and infatuated persons that some have supposed.

JAMES A. SHEDD.

✂ The persecution of Elder Witherell is hardly more venomous than that directed against Rev. MOSES THACHER of Norfolk County in this State. Attempts are now making to destroy Mr. THACHER for having seceded from the masonic society. The masons act in conformity to the terms of the following

MASONIC OATH.

From the Knight of the Red Cross' Oath.—"You further swear, that should you ever know a companion violate any essential part of this obligation, you will use your most decided endeavours, by the blessing of God, to bring such person to the STRICTEST AND MOST CONDIGN PUNISHMENT, AGREEABLY TO THE RULES AND USAGES OF OUR ANCIENT FRATERNITY, and this by pointing him out to the world as AN UNWORTHY AND VICIOUS VAGABOND, BY OPPOSING HIS INTEREST, BY DERANGING HIS BUSINESS, by transferring his character after him wherever he goes, by exposing him to the contempt of the whole fraternity and the world, during his whole natural life."

